DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 293 926 UD 025 716

AUTHOR Moore, Donald R.
TITLE The Relationship between Compensatory Education and Regular Education: Reactions.
PUB DATE Dec 86
NOTE 18p.; In: Designs for Compensatory Education: Conference Proceedings and Papers (Washington, D.C., June 17-18, 1986); see UD 025 691.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Administrative Policy; *Compensatory Education; *Coordination; *Disadvantaged; Elementary Education; Faculty Development; Federal Programs; Grouping (Instructional Purposes); *High Risk Students; Instructional Effectiveness; School Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS *Education Consolidation and Improvement Act 1981; *Service Quality; Special Needs Groups

ABSTRACT

The papers presented at this conference review current research on effective educational practices for low-achieving students and identify those that might be applied to programs funded under Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. This reaction report focuses on the relationship between compensatory education and regular education in response to papers prepared for the conference by Allington and Johnston, Hallinan, and Griffin. Research by others who have analyzed aspects of these issues is also considered. Comments are based on a series of studies concerning the implementation of educational reforms affecting low income, minority, handicapped, and female children. These studies were guided by a model for understanding the educational system called the "service quality model." The model emphasizes the importance of analyzing practices at multiple levels of the educational system that affect service quality. Some key features of the model are briefly described. Next, the following issues are analyzed by drawing on the service quality model and on the specific research cited at the beginning of the paper: (1) program coordination; (2) Chapter 1 programs as within-class ability groups; (3) staff development; (4) effective schools research and compensatory education; and (5) the current status of children at risk. The paper argues that Chapter 1 has had limited impact not only because the categorical program strategy has significant shortcomings, but because any reform strategy confronts deep-seated organizational, political, and psychological dynamics that frustrate change. A list of references is appended. (PS)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION: REACTIONS

by

Donald R. Moore
Designs for Change
Chicago, Illinois

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION: REACTIONS

These comments focus on a series of topics pertaining to the relationship between compensatory education and regular education in response to papers prepared by Allington and Johnston, Hallinan, Griffin, and others who have analyzed aspects of these issues. These comments are based primarily on a series of research studies concerning the implementation of educational reforms affecting low-income, minority, handicapped, and female children (children at risk) that have been carried out by Designs for Change. The topics of these research studies include the implementation of strategies for on-site assistance to schools attempting to implement basic reforms, the nature and costs of staff development activities in urban school systems, the nature of student classification systems in urban school systems, and the nature and impact of the education reform strategies of parent and citizen advocacy groups (Moore, Schepers, Holmes, & Blair, 1977; Moore & Hyde, 1980; Moore, Hyde, Blair & Weitzman, 1981; Moore, Soltman, Steinberg, Manar, & Fogel, 1983). The basic method of each study was focused qualitative research, with the study of multiple sites employed to clarify similarities and differences.

These studies were guided by a model, for understanding the educational system, called the "service quality model," which was itself refined through this series of studies. This model has been described in detail elsewhere (Moore et al., 1983). Below, some key features of the service quality model are described briefly, since the model is useful in thinking about the relationship of compensatory education and regular education.

The Service Quality Model

Recent research concerning the characteristics of school environments indicates that there are substantial differences in the nature of services provided to children day-to-day, even in schools that serve similar student populations and have similar levels of monetary and human resources available. Such services to children are the tangible link between school inputs, on the one hand, and the impact of schooling on student growth and progress on the other. Thus, we conclude that a central issue for those concerned about equal to educational opportunity for children at risk is to identify the nature of services to children that bring about desired outcomes for student growth and progress and to identify those practices at the classroom level, the school level and other levels of the

educational system that facilitate the provision of such quality services.

Drawing on the legal and ethical traditions that form the basis for the concept of equal educational opportunity, as well as a range of research about the functioning and impact of education reform, we have identified three standards that are useful for judging the quality of services to children:

- Increasing children's opportunities to receive services shown through research to enhance student progress toward high priority educational objectives.

- Increasing children's opportunities to receive services that reflect a coherent effort to respond to special needs that limit progress toward high priority educational objectives, even if there is no compelling research indicating that a particular approach to meeting special needs has clearly proven effective in enhancing student progress.

- Increasing children's opportunities for access to school itself and access to specific school services and programs.

The quality of services to children is determined most directly by formal and informal practices at the school and classroom levels. Recent research about the importance of the school as a social system, including the effective schools research, draws particular attention to school-wide norms, organizational routines, and the like that shape service quality. However, it is also clear that practices at other levels of the educational system, including school district, state, and Federal levels, have a major impact on service quality, so the school cannot simply be analyzed in isolation. Thus, we conclude that it is important to analyze practices at multiple levels of the educational system that affect service quality. With respect to compensatory education, for example, it is important to analyze compensatory education services and practices in light of the functioning of the entire school, including the regular program, and to analyze those practices at higher levels of the educational system that affect the nature and quality of compensatory education services provided to children in schools and classrooms.

A final feature of the service quality model incorporates a strategy first proposed by Allison (1971) and first applied to education by Elmore (1978) of drawing on alternative social science theories in turn as "conceptual lenses" for understanding the nature of educational practices at various levels of the system and the services that result from these practices. The service quality model draws on six such perspectives:

systems management perspective (Elmore, 1978), conflict and bargaining perspective, (Wirt & Kirst, 1972; Spring, 1978; Williams, 1978; Edelman, 1964; Scheingold, 1974), economic incentives perspective, (Pincus, 1984; James, Kelly, & Garms, 1970; Wildavsky, 1979; Moore & Hyde, 1981), organizational patterns perspective (Lortie, 1975; Becker, 1953; Lieberman & Miller, 1978; Sarason, 1971), subculture perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Mehan & Wood, 1975; Sherif & Sherif, 1956; Wolcott, 1977), and professional participation and development perspective (Elmore, 1978; Schmuck, 1977; Hall & Loucks, 1978). We find that viewing a particular issue in light of hypotheses drawn from these six perspectives yields extremely rich and useful insights. We also find that many misleading interpretations of an issue result from taking one of these perspectives to the extreme, while ignoring others (for example, concluding that quality services will be provided to children if persons with formal authority simply issue and enforce detailed directives for subordinates or concluding that quality services will be provided to children if teachers are given near-total autonomy to do what they think is best).

A Look at Some Specific Issues

In the balance of this comment, a series of specific issues are analyzed by drawing on the service quality model and on the specific research cited above. The issues discussed first are specific ones raised by the three papers to which I have been asked to react. Those discussed later are general ones that are important to overall deliberations about compensatory education because they frame our way of thinking about its relationship to regular education and about how it might be substantially improved.

Program Coordination

The comments by Allington and Johnston concerning the coordination of regular classroom reading programs with compensatory programs is in many respects consistent with the analytical strategy suggested by the service quality model. The authors carefully review research about the specific characteristics of services to children and about the types of educational practices that lead to service quality problems. For example, the authors conclude that teachers working with the same children characteristically fail to communicate even the most basic information to each other about such topics as what texts and methods they are using and how students are progressing. Because the authors emphasize data about lack of coordination between regular and special program teachers, the

reader might conclude that this lack of communication results from some particular feature of Federal programs. However, our own research about classification and program coordination calls this supposition into doubt. We found exactly the same lack of communication existing between regular program teachers who were responsible for the same children as we found between regular program teachers and categorical program teachers responsible for the same children (Moore & Hyde, 1981). And we found the most persuasive explanation of these observations in studies about the nature of teaching as a profession and the social organization of schools, which were carried out by researchers like Becker (1953), Sarason (1971), and Lortie (1975), who collected their data before categorical programs came into prominence. Lieberman and Miller (1978) capture this important teacher norm that undermines coordination when they write:

> Being private means that teachers do not share experiences about their teaching, their classes, their students or their perceptions of their roles with anyone inside the school building . . . 'You, do your thing in your class and you leave and don't talk to anyone about it.'

This makes the problem of program coordination very difficult to solve, since it runs up against a basic norm binding together the school as a social organization, and is not merely an aberration recently introduced by the coming of Federal categorical programs.

I offer a similar interpretation of another observation made by Allington and Johnston who, along with many others, note the preference of Chapter 1 personnel for pullout programs, and the persistent tendency of local staff to "misinterpret" Federal requirements as requiring that students are to be pulled out. Here again, if those who have written about the basic norms of the schools are to be believed, we are running up against deeply ingrained customary practice. Teachers have autonomy in their classroom, and in most schools they view it as very threatening to co-teach with another teacher in the same room, which would be the practical impact of Chapter 1 instruction in the regular classroom (Lieberman & Miller, 1978).

Another strength of Allington and Johnston's analysis, from the perspective of the service quality model, is that they step back from the school and classroom level and analyze the impact of coordination (or typically lack of coordination) at higher levels of the system. They summarize substantial evidence about the failure of district level staff to coordinate regular and categorical programs. Here again, our data about district-level program coordination and district-level

staff development coordination support their observations. However, as at the school level, our research indicates that the lack of coordination that exists, for example, between the Chapter 1 coordinator and the reading coordinator also exists between the reading coordinator and the language arts coordinator, who are both locally funded. Here again, we seem to be dealing with a basic tendency of bureaucratic organizations like school districts to divide responsibilities up into parts and parcel them out to various organizational units. These units will inevitably be given or will assume considerable power over their area of responsibility, fragmenting the organization into numerous parts that resist top-down control (Allison, 1971; Elmore, 1978; Cyert & March, 1963).

Moving to the Federal level, the authors credit much responsibility for program fragmentation at school district and school levels to the basically categorical nature of Federal reform efforts. We certainly agree that Federal reform initiatives have done nothing to alleviate service fragmentation and have in many instances intensified it. However, consistent with the analysis above, we disagree that observed problems of fragmentation at school and school district levels are fundamentally the result of Federal and state intervention. Rather, our data indicate that Federal and state programs took their place in an already fragmented service planning and delivery system. Had Federal programs been initially conceived in broader terms, they would have encountered enormous pressures toward fragmentation and compartmentalization as they moved through the implementation process (Allison, 1971).

Our data suggest one promising starting point for achieving greater coordination at both school district and school levels: encouraging the individual who has the formal authority to press for coordination to exercise that authority. It is customary for principals and for the person with the appropriate supervisory authority at the school district level (usually a deputy or associate superintendent to whom both staff and line administrators ultimately report) to exercise very little control over their subordinates. However, these individuals are perceived by their subordinates as possessing legitimate authority, so that if they choose to exercise it vigorously and skillfully, they can elicit a constructive response (Becker, 1953; Lortie, 1975). (For example, if a principal insists that all teachers working with the same children must meet at least once a week and follows through on this directive, norms about coordination can be changed over time.) Another staff member, acting with clear support from the responsible administrator, can also take such initiative and make it work. Further, while it is possible for other staff to initiate such coordination without the clear backing of the key administrator, such coordination efforts are very

fragile and can disappear overnight with a shift of the personnel involved.

Chapter 1 Programs As Within-Class Ability Groups

Hallinan presents a model for explaining student achievement in Chapter 1 programs and discusses points of agreement between this model, derived from research about ability grouping, and research results concerning the achievement of Chapter 1 students. As with the paper just discussed, the author presents a detailed analysis of important aspects of the services that a Chapter 1 student is likely to experience, as well as an analysis of teacher practices that create problems in the delivery of services and that may limit student achievement in Chapter 1.

Hallinan's analysis of Chapter 1 as a form of ability grouping suggested for me the need to analyze the position of the Chapter 1 student within the system of grouping and tracking that exists within the regular school program, apart from Chapter 1 participation. A recent study of tracking by Oakes (1985), as well as other research on tracking and ability grouping, underscores the pervasiveness of various forms of tracking which seem to be intensifying in response to the excellence movement, despite evidence that tracking is detrimental to low-achieving students. When Chapter 1 is discussed, a contrast is frequently made between pulling students out for Chapter 1 programs and serving them in the "mainstream." However, students with low reading achievement who are candidates for Chapter 1 are likely to already be in a low track or ability group, with all the attendant features of such low tracks (e.g., slow pacing, an emphasis on rote learning). In short, the child's basic classroom or ability group placement may already be outside the "mainstream" and understanding more about the child's position in the regular program's track system could refine the mainstream versus pullout dichotomy (Shuy, 1978).

With respect to the basic concerns suggested by the service quality model, I would suggest several questions for Hallinan that go beyond her effort to analyze why things are the way they are:

- What alternative approaches to the provision of Chapter 1 services would be more potent than the current program?
- What institutional norms, routines, and other organizational regularities would be challenged by

such alternative approaches and how could such difficulties be overcome?

Staff Development

Griffin describes a conception of staff development that he argues is appropriate for improving the quality of education and the achievement of students in Chapter 1 schools, which he describes as follows:

> Instead of concentrating upon the development and implementation of a content-driven intervention to be introduced into teachers' and others' professional lives, attention is given to manipulating the environment in which teachers do their work such that work is positively affected . . . . Naturally, enacting such a strategy will eventually call for the introduction of "new" content, but the introduction is in response to, rather than the cause of, the structural manipulation of school context variables.

From the standpoint of the service quality model, this point of view grows from the "teacher participation and development perspective," whose core belief has been stated as follows:

> Organizations should function to satisfy the basic needs of their members--for autonomy and control over their work, for participation in decisions affecting them, and for commitment to the purpose of the organization. (Elmore, 1978)

For those who are primarily concerned about improving the quality of educational services for children, the appropriateness of this approach rests on the claim that increased teacher participation and autonomy will lead to improved educational quality. While we agree that teacher participation and commitment are absolutely essential to improving educational services, we also find basic shortcomings in the formulation of this idea advanced by Griffin. Like other mortals, teachers define problems and problem solutions in light of their existing organizational routines, their existing frames of reference, and their self interest. For the benefit of students, autonomy must be exercised within some clear limits. For example, we have just discussed the deep-seated teacher resistance to coordinating instructional approaches for individual students who receive reading instruction in Chapter 1 and in the regular program. We believe that it should be a "given" that such coordination should begin to take place; exactly how this occurs could entail considerable flexibility

and teacher planning and participation. To cite another example, inappropriate referrals of children for special education assessment have been identified by researchers as a leading cause of the misclassification of Black students as mentally retarded (Panel on Selection and Placement of Students in Programs for the Mentally Retarded, 1982). Mechanisms for the intervention of an expert teacher to help solve a child's problems in the regular classroom before referral leads to special education evaluation should, we believe, be standard practice in every school. Whether such mechanisms are established should not depend on whether teachers decide they need such a reform. Again, given the decision to implement such a change, one can imagine considerable teacher decision-making about how it is done.

What we are suggesting is not a comprehensive and self-defeating effort to prescribe and monitor every aspect of teacher behavior, that Wise (1979) called "hyperrationalization." Rather, the potential for improving service quality lies in identifying a limited set of critical practices most important in increasing service quality and conducting a concerted campaign for their implementation, while allowing and encouraging wide areas of teacher autonomy and flexibility. Thus, we conclude that a somewhat different balance between a systems management approach and a teacher participation and development approach stands a much better chance of improving service quality.

Griffin fails to cite convincing evidence that the approach he advocates is applicable to schools serving large numbers of low-income children and operating under the constraints characteristic, for example, of large urban school districts. A basic piece of empirical evidence supporting the proposed model is the experience of an 18-school consortium in Southern California, which implemented a process similar to the one that Griffin describes under the leadership of John Goodlad (Bentzen, 1974). Participation both by school districts and by schools was largely voluntary. Only two schools had minority populations in excess of 20 percent. The consortium dissolved itself when the project's university researchers terminated their involvement. Our own research on a similar initiative by the same organization (/I/D/E/A/) indicated wide variations in implementation of the basic reform strategy advocated by Goodlad, primarily dependent on the initiative of the school principal (Moore et al., 1977).

Another feature of Griffin's analysis which is contrary to our own data about staff development in big city school districts is the lack of any emphasis on the ways in which school district action can either facilitate or hinder school level initiative to improve practice. For example, we found in studying staff improvement activities in three large school

districts that district scheduling that allowed time for school-initiated staff development strongly encouraged such staff development; decentralization of budgeting and planning decisions to the school level strongly encouraged school-initiated staff development; and the existence of an extensive set of staff development experiences devised independently by central office staff strongly discouraged school-initiated staff development (Moore & Hyde, 1981).

Effective Schools Research and Compensatory Education

The emergence of the effective schools reform movement and related research suggests a highly promising approach to improving service quality for the children who are presently the intended beneficiaries of Chapter 1 (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Potentially, the types of effective school and classroom practices identified through the research can provide a clear link between the resource inputs of schools and appropriate results for low-achieving children. Further unlike compensatory education, there is evidence that effective schools boost the achievement of the lowest-achieving children (see, for example, Advocates for Children of New York, 1986). Of course, there are many cautions to be observed in interpreting the effective schools results, which have been widely noted recently, including the danger of locking onto simplistic cookbook formulations of effective schools correlates and the various problems in reliably identifying high-achieving schools that sustain their results over a period of years and substantially boost the achievement of all children (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983). However, research responsive to these concerns seems to appear weekly, such as a recently published careful study of four effective middle schools in New York City that appears to answer key methodological concerns (Advocates for Children of New York, 1986).

However, there are major problems in applying the findings of the effective schools research on a wide scale, beyond the question of identifying a smattering of schools that are truly effective. It appears that the effective schools movement is frequently proceeding according to a conventional implementation strategy in which a few highly committed principals and school staffs struggle hard to create effective schools, some additional schools make a moderate attempt to become effective, and a large number adopt the rhetoric of effective schools with none of their reality (Moore et al., 1977). For example, the Chicago Public Schools initiated an Effective Schools Program several years ago and gave it substantial funding; however, systematic school-level observation by a civic group indicated that school-level practice bore almost no resemblance to the initially defined effective school characteristics.

The result of Chapter 1, while very modest, are nonetheless observable across a representative sample of schools that receive Federal funds for the program (Carter, 1984). When a more selective sample of Chapter 1 programs was studied that were selected because they had implemented carefully designed compensatory programs, the measured impact was proportionally greater (National Institute of Education, 1978). It has yet to be proven that any effective schools implementation strategy can have widespread substantial impact on student achievement.

Implementation of the effective schools characteristics is a much more challenging problem than implementing a categorical compensatory program, because the characteristics of effective schools focus on redefining the school's core methods of operation, supervisory relationships, norms, beliefs, etc., thus posing a basic threat to the school as a social institution. Such a fundamental shift is absolutely certain to elicit strong resistance of a variety of types, as the service quality model suggests.

The Current Status of Children at Risk

The past twenty years of educational history are described by some as a period of decline from an earlier golden age in public education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). However, when one assembles evidence about the quality of services available to children at risk fifteen years ago in 1970, judged against the service quality standards cited earlier, it becomes clear that there were no good old days in our public schools for low-income, minority, handicapped, and female children. For example:

- In 1970, 48 of the 50 states had laws that sanctioned the exclusion of some categories of handicapped students from school, and the estimates of numbers of handicapped children excluded as a result range from 300,000 to 1,750,000 (Children's Defense Fund, 1974).

- By 1968, 689 Area Vocational Education Schools (AVES) had been built using Federal funds. AVESs were highly desirable educational programs because they frequently prepared students for jobs in expanding areas of the economy and had good ties with industry for job placement. Field investigations conducted by the Federal Office for Civil Rights in the early 1970s indicate minuscule minority enrollments in these programs, resulting substantially from discriminatory AVES policies in site selection and admission that excluded minorities (McClure, 1976).

- In the Southwest in 1970, only 11 percent of Hispanic children were receiving either bilingual or English-as-a-second language instruction, from among those judged to need such instruction based on a study by the National Institute of Education (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1970).

- Boys and girls with identical scores on the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey in 1970 could have been recommended respectively for pre-med and nursing courses, according to the survey's scoring guide (Fishel & Pottker, 1977).

Finally, in 1970, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act had become a de facto general aid program and its intended compensatory nature was recouped only by the initiative of an independent child advocacy organization that published a report about the problem and reform factions within the Office of Education and the Congress (Washington Research Project and NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., 1969; Bailey & Mosher, 1968; Murphy, 1973; Hughes & Hughes, 1978).

We have argued elsewhere in some detail that specific data about service quality from 1970 through 1980 reveal significant marked improvements for various groups of children at risk in access to schools, access to specific school services and programs, coherent response to special students needs, and the availability of educational services shown through research to promote student growth (Moore et al., 1983). Further, we present detailed evidence to support the conclusion that these improvements were stimulated in major respects by Federal and state initiatives aimed at increasing educational equity. Whether or not you agree with each specific comparison made, we hope that you will agree that progress or lack of progress as a result of these Federal and state initiatives should be judged by gauging improvements in service quality for children, not, for example, by asking educators whether they feel particular reforms are burdensome and accepting their answers at face value (Kimbrough & Hill, 1981).

Analysis of service quality for children at risk in the 1980s reveals not only progress, however, but also serious continuing deficiencies in service quality. For example:

- Suspension rates for Black students continue to be twice the rates for White students. The most common reason for suspension from school is absence from school (Moore et al., 1983).

- The clear weight of evidence about the effects of holding students back indicates that such retention,

even when accompanied by substantial remediation, is less effective than promoting the student in increasing basic skills development. Yet the use of retention, typically without significant resources for any remediation, is being mandated by state legislatures across the country (Holmes & Matthews, 1984; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1983; House, Lynn, & Raths, 1983).

- While the percentage of Hispanic children receiving some form of special programming responsive to limited English proficiency doubled from 1970 to 1980, 77 percent of those Hispanic children with limited English proficiency were not receiving any form of special programming responsive to their linguistic needs in 1980 (Moore et al., 1983).

- In most school districts, vocational education programs remained overwhelmingly segregated by sex, with females clustered in those programs that prepare them for the lowest-paying jobs (Harrison et al., 1979).

When one looks closely at such data about service quality, then, children at risk, including those low-achieving children that are the focus of Chapter 1, have made some tangible gains since the 1960s, but continue to occupy a very marginal position in our schools. In our own research on student classification, we frequently found that Federal and state programs benefiting various groups of children at risk were the only organized efforts in evidence through which any systematic effort was being made to address the needs of these children (Harrison et al., 1979). Thus, those who are concerned about educational equity should not easily assume that they are confronting an educational system which has fully incorporated into its customary practices an obligation to serve children at risk and which will act to replace programs that have been modestly effective with more effective ones. As argued throughout this paper, Chapter 1 has had limited impact not only because the categorical program strategy has significant short-comings, but because any reform strategy confronts deep-seated organizational, political, and psychological dynamics that frustrate change.

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